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or collection of books, conceded to be otherwise so full of errors ; and many rationalistic minds will put it on one side as entirely presumptuous in the face of that admission. But it is quite possible to conceive of divine truth being conveyed to man through very imperfect media. It no doubt sorely tries the confidence of many in the Bible to find even the scholarship of the church rejecting it as an infallible authority on every subject on which it treats but one ; but if we *must* prune away old beliefs it does not follow that we must cut down to the roots, and even tear up and destroy that which is *essential* and *vital* to belief.

This is evidently our author's view, and he seriously and skillfully sets himself the task of distinguishing between the essential purpose and authority of Scripture and the perverted ideas of men and theologians in regard thereto.

VI.

A HALF CENTURY OF SONG.*

WE have spent a delightful hour wandering discursively through the four attractive volumes of poetical selections which Mr. Henry F. Randolph has, with much industry and excellent taste, contributed to the literature of the current season. Mr. Randolph has made a very careful survey of the field, and few, if any, exceptions can be taken to either the names, the selections or the mode of classification. None but English poets are represented, and those only who have during the reign of Queen Victoria produced work worthy of their reputation, or have been poet laureates. The selections are sufficiently ample to convey a very fair idea of the peculiarities of each poet.

One cannot fail to be struck with the extent and variety of poetic talent under review. Rich, indeed, has the Victorian era been in works of genius. If no one name stands out with the pre-eminence of a Shakespeare or a Milton, there are scores of gifted men and women whose writings possess a wondrous charm, and the thought of grouping men together according to their poetic affinities and culling from each the choicest specimens of their life work is a peculiarly happy one.

A few names we miss which might perhaps be naturally expected to be found. George Eliot one would think entitled to a niche, and also the two Montgomerys. Certainly the author of the hymn beginning :

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,

ought not to be passed over in any enumeration of modern hymn-writers or distinctively religious poets of the past fifty years

A capital feature of this work is the care bestowed upon the text, the selections being from the standard editions, and great attention having been given to the preservation of the original punctuation and orthography. Brief notes, biographical and bibliographical, precede the text in each volume, and at the end of each are full indexes, a list of the authors, and some useful and interesting explanatory notes.

VII.

A STORY WITH TWO AUTHORS.

THE plot of "The Second Son"[†] turns upon the weakness of an English squire, who petulantly disinherits the oldest of his three sons on the ground of a romantic love affair, and entails his landed estates upon his youngest son, because

* "Fifty Years of English Song." Selections from the Poets of the Reign of Victoria. Edited and arranged by Henry F. Randolph. A. D. F. Randolph & Co.

† "The Second Son." A novel. By M. O. W. Oliphant and T. B. Aldrich. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

the second refuses to profit by the misfortunes of his elder brother. The peculiarities of the laws of primogeniture and entailment are brought out, although in this case they are not answerable for the mischief occasioned by a rash procedure on the part of the parent. The story has many strong points about it, especially if viewed as a satire upon the manners and customs of the English upper classes, or, indeed, the rich and luxurious classes everywhere. The authors seem to have agreed upon a pessimistic standpoint. There is not a hero or heroine in the whole novel worthy of the name. Even the villain of the story is a blundering guardsman who is as much fool as knave. As a picture of English life it is one-sided. The men and women are below the average in intellect as in manners. When father and sons meet there are always pitiful exhibitions of folly and rancour, with the thinnest gauze of good breeding to prevent actual breaches of the peace. There is something approaching imbecility in the amiable efforts of the injured brother to ward off the troubles continually brewing in the family. The ideal woman of the piece is a mere sketch and hardly awakens sympathy. There is a promise of character about Lily Ford, but at the critical moment she vanishes from sight, and when she again appears is evidently but a very commonplace personage after all. To us the work bears evidence of an overstraining at effect, and a consciousness of difficulty in the treatment. Either author would probably have written a better story if unencumbered by the assistance of the other.

VIII.

CARE AND CULTURE OF CHILDREN.

THE Woman's Temperance Association of Chicago publish a volume on the care and culture of childhood,* by Mary Allen West. The author claims that the book "has grown naturally out of the rich soil of a thousand homes," which being interpreted means that the author writes from experience and observation and not from mere theory. The contents are varied, including chapters on the child's body, babyhood, childhood, boyhood and girlhood, children's rights, work and play, amusements, behavior, domestic economy, family government, practical health hints, and other topics. There are also a number of illustrations, and, interspersed among the reading matter, are songs set to music, suitable for the nursery and the home. The book makes a large and handsome octavo of 722 pages, including a copious index. It is pervaded by strong Christian and temperance sentiment, the author holding that the growth in a child of a true and healthy religious and physical life is greatly to be desired and sought after, not only for its own sake, but for the general well being of society. On the various practical questions coming under treatment the views set forth are sound and sensible. The variety and range of topics almost invite the remark that some at least must suffer from superficial or hackneyed treatment, but the author appears to have labored conscientiously and carefully over each section, and to have brought together many wise thoughts and counsels for the benefit of those who really desire guidance and help in the care and nurture of children. The subject is one of vast moment and deserves the exhaustive treatment it has here received.

IX.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Messrs. Funk & Wagnalls have added an interesting contribution to Shakespearean literature† in the form of a *fac-simile* of the original 1622 (sometimes

* "Childhood, its Care and Culture." By Mary Allen West. Woman's Temperance Publication Society.

† "The Works of William Shakespeare," in reduced *fac-simile*, from the famous first folio edition of 1623. Funks & Wagnalls.